

Series 1999-2000
Circular Letter: C-13

TO: Superintendents of Schools
High School Principals

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

DATE: March 17, 2000

SUBJECT: Connecticut Academic Performance Test: May 2000

As we approach this year's Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) examination for Grade 10 students, we are calling to your attention the issue of exemption and attendance rates. Statewide, about 31% of the tenth grade special education students and 80% of the limited English proficient students were exempted or absent from last year's test.

With a six-year history of CAPT testing, each school and district should be looking at its historical trends of exemptions and attendance, and taking steps to reduce both. Many districts have had classroom discussions of the importance of the skills measured on CAPT. Obviously, the support of the administrative and teaching staff at each high school has a strong influence on students' perceptions of this assessment. In addition, all eleventh and twelfth graders should be strongly encouraged to retake those portions of the test on which they have not met or exceeded the state goal.

The statute that established the CAPT requirement states, *"each student enrolled in tenth grade in any public school . . . should take a statewide mastery examination."* While there is a perception of no consequences for not taking or not doing well on the CAPT, please know that we are working with all Connecticut colleges and universities to add CAPT as one part of their admission process. We are also working with employer organizations to encourage all their members to request high school transcripts and CAPT scores as part of the employment selection process. In addition, we have identified a number of district initiatives to encourage CAPT participation on the Promising Practices section of our Department web page: www.state.ct.us/sde.

We urge you to set a goal this year of having the fewest exemptions and the highest attendance or participation rate since we began CAPT testing in 1995.

If you have any questions, please call Dr. Douglas Rindone, Chief, Bureau of Student Assessment and Research, at 860-566-1684. Thank you.

TSS:hrk